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DEFENSE ISSUES

For the National Guard to "always be there" in the future, America must ensure the Guard is "always ready." As America demands more of guardsmen, it must attend more to the burdens placed on their shoulders.

Volume 13, Number 1

The New Guard for the New Century

Remarks by John J. Hamre, deputy secretary of defense, at the Army National Guard Readiness Center, Arlington Hall, Arlington, Va., Dec. 5, 1997.

Thank you. ... I really am honored and delighted to be here today to celebrate this, the [361st] birthday of our nation's oldest military institution. It is also a great privilege for me ... to celebrate an organization that has as its motto, "Always ready. Always there."

Everyone knows the famous painting of Gen. [George] Washington crossing the Delaware River, leading the Christmas Day attack on Trenton. What most people don't know is that the brave individuals who navigated the icy waters to victory were citizen-soldiers hand-picked by Washington for their skill and dedication. They had trained as a militia, honed their sea skills as Massachusetts fishermen and served together in the Revolution. ...

The patriotic service of our citizen-soldiers has echoed down through the centuries. You have been there when our nation needed you most. Securing us during invasion and civil war in the 1800s. Sacrificing in the trenches of World War I. Serving in all theaters during World War II. And defeating aggression from the frozen hills of Korea to the searing sands of Kuwait.

I remember back in 1990 when the president mobilized the active duty military and sent them to war in August. But America didn't go to war until that fall when the moms and dads and kids went down to the courthouse and saw off their families as they got on the bus and tied those little yellow ribbons on trees. That's when America went to war -- when our guardsmen and reservists got on board.

Today, as we approach the next century, America is relying on its citizen-soldiers more than ever.

In the past few years tens of thousands of guardsmen ... have mobilized for operations all over the world. You have kept the no-fly zones of Iraq free of Saddam Hussein's aircraft. You have bridged Cold War divides in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics. And as I saw firsthand just last week during a visit to Bosnia for Thanksgiving, guardsmen and reservists today are making peace possible in that region. We could not do that job today without our guardsmen and reservists.

We are relying on the National Guard more at home as well -- in the fight against chemical and biological weapons. And I want to talk to you about that for just a moment. I cannot overstate the importance of being ready to confront this terrible prospect that may be in our future.

Iraq's hidden arsenal has reminded us of the threat they pose to the Middle East. The subway attack in Tokyo reminds us this can be our future here at home. We have got to be ready for this. We have got to be able and ready to fight a fight that may occur within our own borders.

Making sure we can respond to any chemical or biological attack is one of Secretary [of Defense William] Cohen's highest priorities.

Today, the National Guard is answering this call in over 120 cities by training the local teams who will be first on the scene of any incident. And here at DoD, a "tiger team" is developing a plan for the Guard to do even more to help communities respond to this grave threat. I must say, there is probably no more important mission facing the department right now than being prepared to defend this country at its home in the event of a chemical or biological attack. And the Guard has to be at the forefront.

Thanks to the National Guard, DoD support to communities is growing in other ways, too. The director of military support (DOMS) is our 9-1-1 service for communities facing natural or man-made disasters. And when communities call DOMS for help, DOMS calls the Guard.

In order to improve the planning for and employment of these Guard forces, the Department of Defense Reform Initiative unveiled two weeks ago by Secretary Cohen assigns a National Guard general officer to be the deputy director of DOMS, and up to half of its staff officers from the Guard and Reserve will be members of the DOMS team.

Today, I can announce that these new staff officers will be in place by September, and I am very proud to report that Brig. Gen. Roger Schultz is today serving as DOMS deputy director. Gen. Schultz is highly decorated for his service abroad in defense of our nation, and he is the right choice to help communities facing civil emergencies here at home. The deputy director of DOMS is a guardsman today, and from Gen. Schultz on, that job will be held by a National Guardsman. ...

But if the National Guard is going to "always be there" in the future, we are going to have to go the extra mile to ensure that the Guard is going to be "always ready." Building the total force is one of Secretary Cohen's highest priorities. So we must heed his call to break down the structural and cultural barriers to further integration of all units -- active, Guard and Reserve. One of these barriers is separate identification cards for active duty personnel and members of the Guard and Reserve. Secretary Cohen is eliminating this barrier today. He's announcing the start of same-color cards for all military personnel. No longer will the first-rate members of the Guard and Reserve be made to feel like second-rate soldiers when they show their badge at the door.

You will be pleased to know that yesterday I authorized a package of changes known as "Change 3" to the Joint Ethics Regulations. And I know this has been plaguing us, and you should all personally thank [Army Lt.] Gen. Edward D. Baca [chief, National Guard Bureau] for the leadership he's shown in getting that initiative done. This will finally clarify when federal ethics standards are applied to National Guard personnel.

Fully realizing the total force on an even wider scale is what those of you here for the Army DIVPAC [Division Project Action Committee] Conference are doing by designating Army National Guard divisions for conversion to combat support and combat service support units. Thanks to your efforts the Army Guard will remain a viable, relevant and ready part of our seamless Total Force well into the future. For whether full-time or part-time, every member of our total force needs to be fully equipped, fully trained and fully prepared for the future.

Building the total force will also take our total dedication to the principles Secretary Cohen outlined two months ago. It will take leaders who understand their responsibility for building the total force. It will take mutual trust on the part of every unit -- active, Guard and Reserves. It will take a commitment to provide the means to accomplish every mission. And it will take commanders dedicated to the readiness of the total force.

Only yesterday the Army announced what I think is a historic plan to put these principles into action. Six of the Army Guard's enhanced separate brigades will form two new integrated divisions under active Army commanders.

Never before have we so closely integrated the warfighting expertise of the Army National Guard under the experience and leadership of the active Army to enhance our nation's combat capability. But never before has it been so important that we make our nation's warfighting capability a truly "Total Force"

warfighting capability.

In building this new Guard for the new century we must also remember the special role of our guardsmen. ... We have had enormous success with an all-volunteer force for two decades. But as we concentrate on a smaller force of professionals, we risk creating a gap between what the military does and society's appreciation of what the military is. The National Guard bridges that gap. You bring the perspective of the military to the civilian community and the perspective of the civilian community to the military.

Building a new Guard for the new century will also take something else. As we demand more of our guardsmen ... , we must care more for the unique burdens you shoulder. George Washington said, "When we assume the soldier, we do not lay aside the citizen."

In pursuit of the total force, we must not lay aside either the soldier or the citizen. We must not exploit the soldier to the exhaustion of the citizen. We must not overburden the families and employers who sacrifice so much. That is why DoD will continue to minimize repeat mobilizations, to support families when you are deployed and to ensure job protection when you return.

So on behalf of the entire Department of Defense, let me say not only happy birthday to the National Guard, but thank you. Thank you for who you are and what you do. Thank you to all the dedicated guardsmen ... for being "always ready, always there" for America. And finally, for your service and sacrifice, America will be always ready, always there for you.

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DEFENSE ISSUES

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